

The Disciple's Mission

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[0 : 00] Only choice is to welcome his rule or fear it. Chuck Colson delivered this message on one of the most effective gospel presentations ever given in our generation.

His testimony is really close to Peter's message in Acts chapter 2. And when he stood up, and we read these words, you've got to keep a couple of things in mind.

First of all, God's people had been praying. If you read through that in the first chapter of the book of Acts, it tells the believers that they all joined together constantly in prayer.

Never minimize what prayer can do. Second thing is the Holy Spirit was present. In the second chapter and fourth verse describes how they were, quote unquote, filled with the Holy Spirit.

And so no matter how we've been gifted, nothing will be accomplished. Nothing will be accomplished without prayer and reliance upon the Holy Spirit. Do you agree with that? And as we pray and lean on the Spirit, God will use us to communicate the gospel to those for whom Christ died.

[1 : 08] Now you and I are surrounded by people whom we love. Family members, people we work with. People that we know are good, kind people. But without Jesus Christ, where will they spend eternity?

As a matter of fact, they may not be ready to listen to anybody but you because you already have a relationship with them. I see at least four key elements at work in Peter's first message.

First of all, it was personal. Peter personalized this message to us here so that it spoke to their exact situation. Notice how many times he uses that word too.

And by the way, no amount of doctrinal truth will trump personal experience of that truth. Do you agree with that? Somebody has said, many people have said that a message is only effective as the testimony of the person that gives it.

And so, it was personal. If you go back and skim through that, I'll do it for you here. In verse 14, twice. Now I'm using the NIV.

[2 : 12] And this is the 95 version of NIV. Because later on they retranslated it, added some more things, and took some things away that I just think he shouldn't have done that. But verse 14, twice.

He uses that word you. Fellow Jews and all of you who've lived in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you. In verse 22, he used it twice again. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited to God to you.

As you yourselves know. Verse 23, twice again. The man was handed over to you. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death, nailing him to a cross.

In verse 36, he did one time. He used you again. God made this Jesus whom you crucified. Verse 38, twice. Repent and be baptized, every one of you. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Make sense? In other words, this is not just a Bible message. This is a testimony to an audience who stood before him and were convicted.

[3 : 14] In verse 39, again, once this promise is for you and your children. It was personal. Every time you and I share our faith with someone, it should be with individuals.

And you need to make it personal. Personal for the person that's saying it. But also personal to them. Because they need to bring it into their life.

Otherwise, it just stays up here. And I've got to tell you, sometimes us, we people who are in Bible churches, tend to objectify God's message. It's always something to analyze, to parse out, figure out exactly what it says.

And then write it down in notes and we take it home, put it in a file, and we're satisfied. It never hits our heart. That's the one complaint that I have. Objection that I have with Bible churches.

Make it personal. Well, second thing is it was plain. He not only personalized his witness, but Peter got right to the heart of the issue.

[4 : 17] In verse 14, we read that Peter stood up and said, Let me explain this to you. Listen carefully to what I have to say. He wanted to present the gospel in a way that they could understand and respond to.

He wanted his listeners to get the story straight. Now, when you go back and look at what happened, when the Holy Spirit came down like flames of fire and came on the head, when people started speaking in different tongues, speaking in known foreign languages, you notice that I didn't say an ecstatic spiritual language, not the language of angels, but the language of those pilgrims who had come to worship in the city of Jerusalem.

And as common and ordinary men, they spoke in these foreign languages, these unlearned foreign languages. Those that listened who were critical of the gospel message of what they were saying said, They're drunk.

They're drunk. These guys were not drunk. No Jew would eat or drink anything before 9 o'clock in the morning on a Sabbath or a feast day.

And it was about the third hour, 9 o'clock. Notice throughout this message, Peter is only speaking to Jews. You look at that in verse 14, 22, 29, and 36. Pentecost was a Jewish feast, and there were no Gentiles involved.

[5 : 41] In this message, Peter speaks to the Jewish nation and proves to them that the Messiah had been raised from the dead. They're not drunk. Let's get that whole objection, whole idea out of the way.

In verses 16 through 21, Peter points to Joel. And you can read that in your scripture passage also. But if you read that passage carefully, you'll see that he did not say that this was a fulfillment of that prophecy.

Very clear, very correct. For Joel's words wouldn't be fulfilled until the end of the tribulation, when Jesus Christ returns to earth. He does say, however, that this is the same spirit spoken of by Joel. And then in verses 17 and 18, those verses took place at Pentecost. But in verses 19 through 21, those did not take place and won't until the end of times.

Between verses 18 and 19, if you look at that, there's a whole world of time. Because during verses 18 and 19, you'll see that the entire church age would unfold.

[6 : 47] That's where you and I fit into this first message. So it was very plain, very pointed. Not only was it personal and plain, but also it was persuasive.

Now keep in mind, he's got an audience, almost a captive audience. They're wanting to know exactly what's going on with all of this very unusual kind of things that are going on. He goes now to prove that Jesus Christ was alive.

And he uses really five convincing arguments. First of all, the Lord's person and life demanded that he be raised from the dead. Keep in mind, they knew that wherever Jesus went, there were miracles and signs that went along.

And these signs weren't just popping out of the air. They could go back to their scripture and see in Isaiah and other passages of the Old Testament, or the complete revealed word of God to them at that time, that these were signs that point to their Messiah.

You have to close your mind or be ignorant of scripture to not to recognize that this is about what Jesus did, his person, in his life. John chapter 10, verses 17 and 18, Jesus said this.

[7 : 58] He said, the reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. Keep in mind, even Pilate was amazed.

He couldn't hardly believe that Jesus had died so quickly. The reason, normally, when someone was crucified, it was between two and three days before they affixed or suffocated.

Because as they pushed up, they would get a breath of fresh air and then at exhaustion, they would sink back down and then they would slowly begin to affixiate. And they'd push up and down and up and down.

Torturous way, torturous way to die. Jesus died within a couple of hours. He said, no one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my father. Now, Jesus' words were recorded that they remembered these things.

[9 : 03] If he raised others, he could, by God's authority, certainly be raised himself from the dead. Don't you agree? Jesus wasn't a captive. He wasn't trapped by the cross.

Remember what he said? He said, if I wanted, I could call down how many angels? Ten thousand angels. But what prevented that? The almighty will of God, not for just for himself, but for all who would follow in the years to come, by faith, believing in Jesus Christ.

He submitted to the plan of God. Psalm 16, 8 through 11 predicted the resurrection. Peter reminded them of David's death.

What did it say? God will not allow, it says in there, his holy one to undergo decay. It predicted the resurrection. The apostles themselves were witnesses and had seen the risen Christ as well as more than 500 other people.

And you can check that out in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. They weren't the only one. This wasn't a private miracle. This wasn't something just for the closest circle of people. More than 500 people saw the resurrected Jesus Christ.

[10:25] And by the time he writes that letter to the Corinthian church, some had died, but most were still alive. You don't believe them? Ask them. The coming of the Spirit was proof that Jesus was alive.

And again, Peter points out what they'd seen and heard in their own experience. He's bringing the light of scriptures to bear on what they can't deny. And that's a challenge to me also because you've got to bring your present life into what the scripture says.

I can remember my first exercise, my first experience of this. I was sitting in my backyard and I was looking up at the heavens. I was looking at the clouds. Then I got to thinking about the prophets in Judea whenever they went out into the desert and were alone with God.

What did they see? What they were doing is putting their world around them into the presence, real presence of Almighty God. When you look up at the sky and you see a particular beautiful sky, keep in mind one of these days those clouds are going to part.

And guess what's going to happen? You only get this from the scripture. Jesus Christ himself will appear. There'll be a shout of command, the sound of a trumpet. And we who are still alive will be caught up.

[11:35] Can you picture that? One of the things you've got to do is practice remembering that. It gets crowded out by the circumstances of our life, the normal circumstances of our life. And you've got to keep going back and rehearsing until the scripture, the truth of scripture coincides with the truth of what you're experiencing.

And at that point, all of a sudden, the word of God starts coming alive. And you begin to think biblically and practically. And then Psalm 110, 1 promises his resurrection.

You go back through. That's the most Christocentric psalm in the Bible. Keep in mind that Peter's not just preaching the gospel of the cross like we preach it today. He's accusing Israel of a crime. Think about that. He's accusing them of a crime in verse 23. And he's warning them that they had rejected and crucified their own Messiah. Peter was giving Israel one more chance to receive Christ.

They killed John the Baptist. They had killed Jesus Christ. But God was now giving them one more chance. The resurrection of Christ was the promised sign of Jonah.

[12:51] And it proved that he was the Messiah. Jesus said that in Matthew chapter 12. So, it's practical. It's practical here.

Verses 37 through 40 describe this. They're convicted. So convicted that they jump in and interrupt Peter. And ask brothers, what do we do?

Jesus is ready to give the answer. He says, repent and be baptized. Every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the forgiveness of your sins. And you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Repent and be baptized. Now, because baptism was a sign of conversion in the Jewish faith. By the way, this is something that I didn't know. I had to look this up. You know, I appreciate Bible commentaries.

Keep in mind, that doesn't mean you're diluting the things. These guys, it's like sitting in a classroom. And sometimes those commentary notes or the notes in your Bible. Are like listening to someone who is more spiritually educated than you.

[13:50] And listening to them tell you. So, I appreciate stuff like that. Baptism was a sign of conversion in the Jewish faith. That was normally reserved for Gentiles. So, here Peter's demand would have offended his Jewish audience.

And cost them, guess what? Respectability. Peter is calling for a public, radical testimony of conversion. Not a private decision that they could go home and think about.

But, sometimes when we feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we say, that's right. I've got to remember that. You'll take it home. You'll put it in a note, like I said. And commit to think about it later.

But, 90% of the time, you won't think about it later. You'll do like I did. Some of the notes that I got at Dallas Bible College. I've gone back and looked at some of those notes.

And things that I thought I always knew. I've dated that thing. I know exactly where I got it from. But, other things, I committed to memory.

[14:54] And I don't remember where I got it. And, half the time, it's halfway wrong. In that way that they would be identifying themselves with Jesus Christ, there's the same message that John the Baptist preached in Mark 1.

Jesus preached the same thing in Matthew 4. I want to make a point right now. To make baptism essential to salvation in the receiving of the Holy Spirit is to deny the experience of the Gentiles in Acts chapter 10.

Which is God's pattern for you and I today. In Acts 2, the Jews received the Spirit when they repented and were baptized. In Acts 8, the Samaritan received the Holy Spirit by the laying on the apostles' hands.

You still need that today? No. Believers today receive the Holy Spirit when they believe. Just like the Gentiles in Acts chapter 10. There's no salvation in baptism.

Because salvation is by what? Faith in Jesus Christ. Does that mean that you shouldn't get baptized? No, indeed. No, indeed.

[16:10] Baptism is a way of publicly testifying that you have trusted Jesus Christ. But you don't get baptized to believe, to be saved.

It's like this ring. You know, when I was married to Brandon's mom, I don't think I ever took it off. Maybe once or twice. But most of the time, that saint became so much a part of my hand that you couldn't take it off.

It kind of got in there. But it was a sign to everybody that I was married. Didn't make me married. It was just letting everybody else know. After Jeannie passed away and I married Frida, it's one of those things that I wear it most of the time, but not all of the time.

Does that make me less married if, for some reason, I don't have it on my hand? No, indeed.

Baptism is what we're supposed to do. Baptism by immersion is the way that it was done in the book of Acts.

Baptism by immersion is the way that it was done in the book of Acts. It symbolizes the end of the old life and the beginning of a new life in Jesus Christ. Does that make sense? By the way, I must be really saved because I got baptized three times.

[17:26] In the Methodist church, the Bible church, and later on, in a pond that ducks had swam on wasn't the cleanest thing in the world.

But listen, it was after I got saved. And by the way, not all Bible churches believe in water baptism. My first pastor didn't believe it was necessary. If you want to do it and that's what you think the Bible teaches, then do it.

I'll do it for you. But it's not necessary. It wasn't until my first year, year and a half into DBC, that we went back home.

And I said, Harold, I want to be baptized with my wife. And I was. Our responsibility is to stand up like Peter and recognize that we need each other.

He didn't do this all by himself. If you take another look at verse 14, while it's true that Peter stood up and preached, the Bible says the other 11 stood up with him. He wasn't alone.

[18:31] Folks, you won't be alone either. Other people like you who need will do the same as they find opportunity. And of course, our Savior, who said, I'll never leave nor forsake you.

For the Lord, I'm with you always, even until the end of the age. Folks, you are the ambassadors of Jesus Christ. Faith Bible Church is not this building.

As nice as it is. Faith Bible Church is you. And you have the opportunity, not the responsibility, I'm just going to say the opportunity, to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

And those words, he says, Lo, keep this, put this in the bank, I'm with you always. When you stand up, the Spirit of Jesus Christ in you will speak.

Sometimes words come out of your mouth that you didn't plan. Happened to me the last trip in Croatia. I had a chance to say something to the church. And I didn't have a clue what I was going to say.

[19 : 32] But I was from America. America. America. And I knew I needed to say something. From our church here to that church there. And I opened my mouth.

It never happened to me before. The words began to come out that were as polished as the wine. Practiced them for weeks. They were unrehearsed.

And they were to this church, this sister church. Other times there's nothing wrong with working on it, working on your testimony. But keep in mind, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, you don't look for yourself.

All of those commands in the Bible aren't there to command you. There are things that God says that we voluntarily submit ourselves. It's called obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ. And when that happens, when you take that to yourself, faith Bible church will begin to grow. By the way, online I looked at what were some of the testimonies of your church.

[20 : 37] You know you have a testimony. How many of you have looked at faith Bible church online? You ought to look. You've got a good testimony.

Folks that have visited this church have been impressed with how friendly you are, with the solidity of a Bible message. But that all came because some people wander in.

Other people come because they've been invited. And if each and every one of you pictured someone that you know and have a connection to, and you said, I'm going to invite them. I'm going to offer to take their kids, bring their kids. I'm going to share my faith with them. You'd be surprised. You will be surprised at what the Holy Spirit will do.

And I think a lot of you are doing that already. But make it a mind. Make it a point. Say to yourself, the Bible says, God says, I am an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

[21 : 37] I invite people, not just to faith Bible church, but I invite them to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior. And they'll start looking for a place to worship.

And guess what? You're the one that shared it? They're going to go where you go. And may God bless this encouraging message, certainly to me, and hopefully you too.

Peter's first message is a pattern. It's the elements of things that you and I need to have a part of our testimony. It needs to be personal. It needs to be plain.

It needs to be persuasive. And it needs to be practical. Okay? Now I want to close with a song. Again, this is the new one for me. How many of you have heard of Joy and Rory Fex? How many of you have heard that song, In the Time That You Gave Me?

[22 : 42] That's a new discovery for me. And it made an impression on my heart because I know that she wrote that song. Later she found out that she had cancer and was not going to recover.

And because they were nationally known country artists, she gave that song to be sung by another man who was a quadriplegic. That's who I heard sing it.

Boy, it captured my heart because keep in mind, I've got a couple of things going in my own background. On December the 1st, my mother passed away. One of those, she was 93 years old. And so I'm tender-hearted toward the things that are part of my early life. We were friends. I fortunately had a chance to visit with her shortly before she passed away, within about a week. She was ready to go. But dying's not easy. Secondly, I'm 72 years old. I'm at a point where my perspective is more in the past than in the future.

[23 : 47] Now, I still, I'm living for the future. I ain't living in the past. But at the same time, you know, there's a reason why wisdom is attributed to elders, mainly because they've got perspective.

They've made all the mistakes that you're still going to make. And they've confessed it, got over it, moved on with it, and have seen from a perspective of time what works and what doesn't.

And for biblical elders, it's important that you pay attention to them. In this song, this is sort of a testimony. If the first one was before, kind of captured my thoughts before I got saved, or when I got saved, now this is sort of my thoughts since I've been saved.

In the time that you gave me.